

Things I Think I Remember

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About Mark And About Things

Hello. I am 45 years old when I started Things. I decided to type my memories this year. There are a lot of good memories worth writing about. My family is wonderful. My father has his radio hobbies. My mother sings like an angel. My brother is a superhero. Last but not least, I am a dreamer.

My father had some guitars so I learned how to play early and I would play with my father often. My mother was the music director of a small baptist church so I learned how to read music and I sang in the choir. My brother was called several times to get my car out of the sand when I would get stuck after taking the station wagon off road.

When I was young and in school, I took band, chorus, drama, yearbook, and creative writing. At church, I took choir, orchestra, puppets, and I played guitar. The youth group was large and we took several trips and lots of parties and camp trips. We were pretty close friends and there were over twenty of us. I lived my life and lot touch with them until later when the internet took off.

I joined the Air Force and ran heavy construction at a bombing grange for a few years in Florida and I even joined a country band with my guitar and keyboard. I learned not to trust people then. People that don't go to church are very different from people that do.

After my tour of duty in Florida, I worked in a pawn shop. I was the only man in a store with three other women. One of my duties was testing television and setting up the display. Heavy lifting was one thing that I was good at.

After that, I went to truck driving school and I drove a semi 48 states and Canada. Truck driving also took me to the Mexico border several times. Being alone taught me how to entertain myself. I came up with stories and started writing novels. Saving money to get them in print was a lot of money, so I only got one in print. "Kiss My Fate" was done in 2004 under the pen name Marc Stone. I drove semi for 12 years, then had to quit for health reasons.

Then, I bought a home recording studio and made some music albums in the basement. I wrote songs and played all the instruments one layer at a time on an 8-track. Soon, I has several home made albums. Later, I would put them up on the internet in the public domain archives.

Another thing I started was a podcast called Ferrit Walk. It was about three paragraphs that I would record in mp3 and upload to a free podcast site. I did that for over a year. It was a good creative outlet. Ferrit Walk was about some characters called Bofo and Ferrit, and their imaginary friends. It was good to daydream that year.

So I type now for my creative side and try to balance my relationship around my hobbies. Thanks for reading.

Dad

I got off the phone with my father. He just turned seventy. I told him about all my memories of the things we used to do together and he was glad that I remembered that he was always there for me. He had a hobby of remote controlled air planes he shared with my brother, but with me, it was the guitar. I learned to play when I was ten.

Dad has some books and albums of Simon and Garfunkel. I could play then and my father joined in a lot. He would take us to the park and he would go by himself. One time, he got his picture in the news paper playing guitar in the park. There was this coffee shop that I went to that had live music. I remembered the time my dad and I played there for tips.

Another thing he did when I was young was tell stories. He was a pirate with a paper hat and he made paper hats for my brother and myself. The pirate dad would come out on Easter and we would follow a map to buried treasure. I used to look forward to Easter, now I look back on Easter.

Also, there were fishing trips and motorcycle rides. He was the first one to the hospital after my first car accident and he told me it was more important that I was only bruised a bit. Cars are just things we can replace. He was always there for me.

He paid the bills by climbing phone poles for the cable television company for over ten years until he got his commercial license, then they made him the boss. After a few years, he got on with the military and worked in communications for the missile testing site. There were some problems and he did retire early with medical issues.

I did move away but I call just to tell him I think of him a lot. I raise my cup of coffee to you, Dad.

Mom

My mother is very talented. She plays piano and sings. Somewhere, she learned how to direct choirs and she would direct adults and children when I was young. There were church musicals and my brother and I learned how to sing. Many times, I was asked to sing with older groups because my mom was missing a voice. I was glad to be there. And she was christian.

She went to church and we learned about the Bible. One year, she had a tape made and the tape sat in a box for years. Later, I would find the tape and make mp3s with it. Then she played the organ in a big church that went with somebody else for choir director. There were other churches where she directed music but eventually she settled for organ player and made the most of it.

Years later, I would be at the house where I grew up with my folks and I would be given a box with my mom's musicals on VHS. I put them on DVD. I'm her biggest fan. I watch them when I think of her. I remember times when she would teach piano and she would have recitals every year with all her students. Her student recitals were my favorite time of year. Then she started teaching singing. I loved it. Now she teaches at the university.

I should call her.

My Brother

My brother is three years older than I am, and he is my hero. When we were young, he would sing and then later he would get into fixing cars. He was always out and around driving the Vega GT dad gave him.

I got a bit older and I started to get out more. One of the things we liked to do was go skating at the local rink. When I got there, I found out he worked there. People said “Oh, you're Fred's brother?” Fred was cool. I found my way to a party and Fred was there and he gave me a ride home on the back of his motorcycle. Some people I knew were going to hear a band practice and when I got there my brother was the bass player. He would introduce me to his college friends. He met them in the drama department. He can act and sing. I was his brother. It was good to be me.

My folks gave me a station wagon and I started getting out more. I would take it off road and get stuck and my brother would show up with chains. He gave me this lecture about how station wagons were supposed to stay on the black stuff. Oops. He pulled me out of the sand more than twice. I finally learned to respect the sand. He would still tell people that he thought I was cool. He was my hero. There goes my brother on his motorcycle. I had my own superhero.

Kindergarten

Back in time we go. I was four years old and ready for the big time. There were twenty of us and we were all crying to our parents that we didn't know if we would ever see them again. We sat in the circle on the floor. The teacher would take us out for recess and I made some friends. Boys were chasing girls.

Then a field trip. There were pine trees and pine cones. My first crush happened that day. Her name was Pam. She asked me if I could get her a pine cone. I climbed a tree and got her one. She was thankful.

I would have lots of dreams about Pam. I never saw her after that day but I still remember her. School was fun. I got to put my hand print in some clay. My mother still has it. We also made peanut butter. Also, I noticed girls early.

First Grade

I liked first grade. It was the first year I had my own desk. There were pencils and paper. The paper had lines on it that were spaced far apart and we practiced the letters of the alphabet. Somehow, I never caught on with cursive writing. I prefer to print my words. My writing was very hard to read.

Reading was also one of the things I remember. For me, reading was fun. It was almost like being taken to another world or visiting a new place.

One thing that I remember from first grade was that I didn't know anyone and I never really made friends there. There was a new school that was closer to home than Kindergarten. All the kids I knew were still on the other side of the lake. Getting to know new people every year was the norm.

There was one kid I knew for a few years. I only saw Darren on Sunday at church. There were some other kids at church that saw year after year but I never got to go to school with them.

Grade School

Now that I am in my forties, grade school is a blur. I had to get used to new classmates every year and there was more reading, writing and math. There was also music.

In the third grade, I read my first novel. The was called "A Wrinkle In Time" by Madeleine L'Engle. The book was good enough that it made me want more. Soon I would find the library and I would read from Robert Frost, Mark Twain, C.S. Luis, and eventually, Stephan King.

I wrote my first essay in the fourth grade. It was a nice three paragraphs on the topic of water. I was hooked when the teacher gave me an "A" I remember sitting in class and the teacher told u that we get to write a paper. I got out my 3x5 index cards and my references. My grandmo9ther got me a giant Websters dictionary. I learned the difference between obtuse and obs truce that year. All I knew was that I wanted to write a novel. Years later, I would write "Kiss My Fate" under pen name Marc Stone and I would pay to get it in print on demand. When I look back on my life, I don't have anything in my past that I wish I had done. I meet people that wish they wrote a novel. I'm not one of those. I did mine.

I also learned to play trombone and trumpet in grade school. We would practice for months. Every week, we would get called out of class and the band would meet in an empty room and rehearse. A few months later, we would have a concert and our parents were all there. My love for music would grow and I would play guitar and write songs. I had a recorder I used in 2000. my love of music came from church and from grade school.

Math is something I use on payday and during tax season. I guess I got my moneys worth out of my free education.

Jr High.

My father had some good job offers so we moved a couple times in the 80s. We left California to go to Colorado. I joined the marching band in Jr high and the teacher put the trombones up front with me in the middle. Years later when I saw the pictures my mother took, I realized that I was a full foot taller than anybody else in band.

Then, my father got another job offer. This time it was New Mexico. In Las Cruces, white people were a minority. It was hard to make friends but I did make some friends at the church. None of them went to my school. There were four Jr high schools in town.

I did join chorus and band. I was the odd man out and nobody wanted to be paired up with me for the chorus numbers. Who needs them. I spent my time in my room playing my dad's twelve string guitar. I was a loner. I looked forward to church. People thought I was different and some even called me gay but I was filled with the holy spirit on a retreat in Colorado and people could tell that I was different somehow. Or, it might just be true that I was a creepy kid that read comics books and collected action figures.

1980 Radio

I discovered radio in 1980. There was a song called Pilot Of The Airwaves. I got the idea to call the local radio station and request music. I sat and listened and my song never played even after the DJ said they would get to it in a bit.

Later, I called them back and she answered and she wasn't busy so we talked. I was lonely and didn't have any friends to talk to so I made friends with the DJ. She told me that the music was already on tape so she couldn't play my song.

The idea came to me to write the story and I typed out the story. I took it to the school news paper and my story made the first page. I was 14 and had my first taste of writing. My mom got me my first typewriter she found in a yard sale for 10 dollars.

Drivers Ed

My parents asked me to take drivers ed and get my license when I was fifteen. High school didn't start until the next year tho. Using the clutch was easy for me in a standard. When I was younger, I would ride a small motorcycle. There were three of us in the car plus the teacher. I got to drive with the two prettiest girls in class.

I did very good in class and made an A. My parents said it would be cheaper on insurance. Since then, I took a lot of driving classes. I used this class later when I started taking driver safety classes in the military and when I became a long haul truck driver.

Again, I feel like I got my money out of my free education. They would hold safety meetings every month and give us videos and test. I always did good. It seems sort of funny that after my first accident and my father convinced me that cars were just things that can be replaced and my safety was more important, I would become a professional truck driver. It just seems odd to me.

Army Brats

Over the mountains and on the other side was an Army base. The teenagers were bussed to the same school I went to. They moved again and again. I had a bit in common with them so I found them easy to hang out with. I moved a lot too. The choices for social circles were pretty limited. There were Mexicans, cowboys, Army brats and there was the church group. The church group was made up of some of each of the others.

I got to know the army brats and I found out that something that was big in Germany was black magic. Talking to the dead was a hobby of one of the girls I was close to. I tried it myself. If you want to talk to dead people just talk to God and make a left. I was filled with the spirit in junior high and I could already talk to angels. I used to wonder why palm readers believed in Jesus. If you want to read a palm, just follow Jesus and turn left. The Christians have a bit of a different view. If you want to know something, follow Jesus and straight on till morning.

OK? So our new friend the essay writer isn't all there up in the head? With a little bit of luck I hope that my different view might make these little pages more entertaining. I had a daydream that I caught the giggles. I set them free when I was done with them. I was hanging out with the Army brats the year I found my sense of humor. What could be funnier then dumping the dependents of the military base in the New Mexico school system is watching a son of a man in cable TV management make friends using his sense of humor and a Bible. I also had comics in my inventory, so I went with Captain America and Steve Martin for my roll models. What the world needs are more funny boy scouts. It went over pretty well with the Army brats.

Marching Band

I played trombone and after months of practice, we piled in the bus and rode to all the football games. We put on a nice halftime show. The marching band was ready. There were parades and football games. Then there was the competition. There were marching bands from all over the state. The year I was in marching band was a good year. We came in first place.

Then another bus ride. I always tried to sit next to a flute player. I liked the way they pucker. They never were interested in me those years. Somehow, girls didn't seem interested in me. There were some of my friends from church and I got to hang out with them.

What I am really talking about was the feeling I get that people don't seem to stay in my life long. After moving and changing schools so much, I keep my distance emotionally.

Drama

I took drama in high school. I would show up to class every day and run my lines. The teacher gave me the lead. We practiced for months and we learned costumes and makeup. Finally, we got to put on the show. We did very well.

One day, there was a children's theater troupe that came to drama class to ask if we wanted to join them. I auditioned and they let me go with them. We played in libraries, art galleries and churches. I got close to them and they were good friends.

Later on in my life, I looked back and realized I couldn't make a living in drama, but I'm glad I did it. There are my little writing hobbies. I had a podcast where I would type three paragraphs about adventures of my imaginary friends. I did the podcast over a year. Now I just type things I think I remember.

High School Graduation

Home economics was a class that was full of pretty girls. I couldn't concentrate. When it was time to graduate, I was missing some assignments and almost had to take summer school. That wasn't the first time I had problems. I had to take biology and English twice. To make a long story short, I was going to graduate.

There we were dressed in caps and gowns and we went single file to shake a hand and get a diploma. Some of my friends were going to have a party but my family was going out to dinner. Little did I know that I would never see them again with few times I would run into an old classmate and they would be working at a grocery store asking if I wanted paper or plastic. Are your curious about what I did after high school? I went to college as a music major. That lasted about a half a year. Then I joined the Air Force.

I wish I paid more attention in school. I never got the connection between school and career. There are a lot of things I had to learn the hard way. How do bank loans work? How do you buy a house? How often do you change the oil in your car? How do you pay taxes? How does insurance work? What is Social Security. What does church have to do with anything? Where are my friends now? I learned that if you want a career, you need a trade school or more college.

College Part one

I got to college and all the classes were spread around. It was a long walk to my classes. I took music and I got to class. I wandered down the halls and I could hear pianos and band instruments. Music filled the air but every few steps I took, the song was different. The thought came to me that I was in over my head.

I could sing and play trombone. Also, I know how to find middle c on a piano but I felt like I didn't know enough to take music in college. There was that song I wrote on sheet music and asked one of the church pianist to play. I wrote it for my mother one Mother's day.

The bottom line was that I felt I didn't know anything. Also, I felt like a pretender. One more thought that came to me, what would I do with a music degree? Teach music was the only thing I could come up with and that didn't feel right. I wanted something else. My father told me I could use my back or my brains. I wanted something more hands on. So, I quit college.

Air Force Basic Training

In the middle of the school year, I dropped out and saw an Air Force recruiter. I took a lots of tests and I did very well. The had a job lined up for me in aircraft armament but I flunked the color vision test. I packed light and I knew they would give me everything I would need. I stepped off the bus and they started ordering us around.

I kept a low profile and stayed under the radar as they looked for people to pick on. Then they gave us jobs. My job was to get scuff marks off the floor in the common room. Other people were given toilet cleaning jobs. I did my job well with a can of metal cleaner and a can of clear polish to put the floor wax back on. Then one day, they started to pick on me so I got an attitude.

There was this girl I met before and when I joined the military, I asked if she would wait for me and marry me. She sent me a letter and broke up with me. I took that very hard and I broke down and cried. They sent me to a shrink and I was given a different job. There were a lot of openings in heavy equipment operator. The girl I was trying to build my life around was gone and every thing I did seemed pointless and meaningless. Every day, I would go for fitness and class room and I still did very well. So I would learn how to run a bulldozer. It turns out that the Air Force was just a job after basic training.

Bulldozer school

I graduated basic and I was sent to Missouri to bulldozer school. In the morning, I would put on my uniform and stand with the others in formation and then we would all pile in these cattle trailers. That's how we got to the dorm and back to school. There were more classes. They gave us test on safety.

After a week of classroom we got to run the equipment. We took dump trucks on muddy trails. We ran graders and steam rollers. There were cranes and finally bulldozers. After school, we were feeling very confident.

On the weekends, I found a rec center where I could borrow a guitar. I played all weekend. I would also write these little adventures of a man I came up with called Mat Stingray. He was a drifter that met women and solved paranormal mysteries, and yes, he had a new girl in every story. Writing little stories and songs was my little hobby but I never showed anyone. There was this collection of poems that my high school class got in print. My x girlfriend never gave it back. I took creative writing in high school but I felt I could never make a living with creative writing. But, I could make a living driving dump trucks.

There She Was

I went back to see my folks and get some stuff after bulldozer school and I also wanted to confront my ex. Some friends of mine were having a get together so I went. Little did I know that it would be the last time I would see them. We didn't keep in touch.

He had a piano and I could find the middle C so I started to play some songs. I was a music major at the university for a few months. And there she was. When I was done playing, I got to sit next to her and I got to know her.

She was very young and pretty and I was older and on my way to Florida to drive dump trucks. Then my ex showed up and I pretended she was replaced. I pretended the young girl was my new girl friend. Oh, the drama.

Mark's Air Force Year One

I left New Mexico in a VW Sirocco. My mom signed for the loan and it was my first car after I burned the motor out of the the station wagon they gave me for graduation. I learned map reading in drivers ed. I got to Avon Park Fl and they set me up in a dorm with a Air Police officer for a room mate. My room mate was in law enforcement.

I got to the job and the heavy equipment operators were called Range Maintenance. We were split into three crews. One crew would paint target and these were vans that were headed for the scrap heap. We paint them and put them on semi's to target convoys on the range. We also would paint old cargo parachutes with targets so jets could strafe with their guns. Then we would maintain the dirt roads with graders. Its nice to drive on roads with no potholes in them.

Next, I looked around and met some local I knew I wouldn't be happy with any of the girls I met and for some reason, they didn't think I was interesting. Well I asked the young girl I met in New Mexico if she wanted a long distance relationship. She said yes. I asked about her from people that new her. This girl was going to be worth the wait. Letters and phone bills for the next few years. After some time, I asked her to marry me. She said yes. I found a silver ring with a cubic zirconium. I asked her about it and she said it wasn't the money she was into. This girl was defiantly worth the wait. So, I put the ring box in my Air Force jacket pocket. The jacket had me last name on it and it had a Air Force patch on the back. You can get one right after basic training. She said yes and only two more years until she graduated high school.

Air Force Year Two

I was sitting in the break room at the place we called the shop when the phone rang. We sat there in the morning and we waited for our crew leader to give us our work assignment for the day. He called me in the office and gave me a scope. My task was to take the scope and climb a fifty foot tower with it. The cameras were down and I was to watch bombing practice and give the a score. I had to line up the scope so the number 0 was on the target. If it was to the left or right, there were numbers in the positive or negative. I set the scope up on the target. Then the phone rang. "Right flank here. 2." so we had another Airman on the left flank tower and we spent the day spaying wasps and scoring bombing runs.

After work, my VW wouldn't start. I forgot to change the oil after my trip to Florida from New Mexico so the motor quit. I had to buy another car. I found this old Oldsmobile and now I had two cars. One did no t. A funny thing happened. The young girl from New Mexico was a year older and her parents said we could get married. I found a place off base. It was a trailer but it would be home.

So, I flew to New Mexico. There she was. Wow! She was so pretty. We got married by the first judge we could find then it was back to Florida. We made some friends and played some dungeons and dragons. She found a job at an Italian restaurant. She was wonderful. Life was good.

Air Force Year Three

I was sitting in the break room when the Sgt came in and told us today we would be with EOD. We met with the crazy people of Explosive Ordinance Disposal and we were to follow them with dump trucks and front end loaders. Out on the range, there was no bombing practice while EOD took the practice bombs and threw them in the bucket of my front end loader. I would dump them in a dump truck and the dump truck would take them to a pit that was dug by another crewman in a bulldozer. Then he would bury them. Then we would meet after work for drinks at the club.

Well I went home to the young wife. She didn't finish high school so she got her GED. She worked at the restaurant. Then an opportunity came to buy a trailer on a quarter of an acre of land. We had our own place. They wanted a down payment and we didn't have money saved so I suggested that they raise the asking price a few thousand and I would write a hot check. It worked.

One of the neighbors was a guitar player for a local band. He heard me play and asked me to join. I was faking the piano when I met my wife so now I could fake the piano for this guy. We played some local bars but he kept getting into fights so I quit the band. Then suddenly, the president was cutting the military jobs and tossing the country into a recession. We went back to New Mexico. She was pregnant and I had no job. Ah drama continues.

1988 Recession

After the Air Force sent us back to New Mexico, I couldn't find a job. We moved in with my folks. It was frustrating and I was also having trouble communicating with the wife. I asked her to go the counseling with me and she refused. So, I asked her to leave. What was I thinking? She was pregnant.

After months, I finally found a job in the toy department of a K-Mart. It started out full time but they cut my hours. Then I found another job at a fast food place. The schedule of the two jobs made me very tired.

Here's an idea, run away to California and start a rock band. I packed my bags and got a ride from a guy I met at K-mart. He was going back to his wife and I was going to start a band with him. We drove strait thru and I found my self selling my electric piano for a bus ticket to my uncles. He was managing a rock band.

California

I showed up at my uncles and he took me to the mall so I could job hunt. I put in a dozen applications and the phone began to ring. I got a job making burritos and washing the pans. Then the phone rang again. I got a job in the fish department at a pet store. I met a girl that could sing. She had friends that wanted to start a band. The phone rang again and it was men's fashions in a department store.

I met with the singer and she wanted to rent a house and put a band together with some of her friends from Arkansas. I played guitar and she sang. Then I met her friends. This could work. Work was good. I spent most of my time folding sweaters.

Then, my grandmother in Arkansas was turning 80 and my uncle was going. I wanted to stay and try to get the band going but that fell thru. My mother was going to be in Arkansas and I was going back with her to New Mexico to go back to college. So my uncle and I drove to Arkansas and my grandmother turned 80. I rode back with my mother and I tried college again.

College Part Two

One thing I knew was how to work a pricing gun so I went for business. I started out in the community college to catch up on the basics. One semester was spent at the community college and the next was on main campus. I went to a Baptist student Union to make some friends and find a quiet place to study.

There was a guy at the student union that could play the keyboards and he started a Christian band. He wanted me to play guitar for him. We played a few places and we went to record some of his original songs. Well, I could write songs too.

Then I met her in class. She was a librarian for NASA. So, I had to leave the christian band because I moved in with her. I was living with her and I wasn't married. Then my father gave me a car but it was in crates and I had to put the motor together and get it running. It ran for a month then I sold it for scrap. So my girlfriend went TDY and temporary went to another town. She met someone and threw me out. I needed a job and no one was hiring.

Secretary School

I couldn't find a job so I went to secretary school, I thought it might help if I was in a job dominated by women. I was wrong. I went to classes and I was the only male. Classes were short and the classes were full. There was typing, filing, shorthand, and computers. There was also business law. I made a lot of friends and even started a study group. There was one that stood out. She had very long hair and she was pretty like a flower child of the sixties. She had four children and we started hanging out during the breaks.

Soon I graduated and went to look for work. No one would hire me because I didn't know Spanish. In Las Cruces New Mexico, most jobs that deal with people want you to be bi-lingual. I did finally find work in a factory thru a temporary employment agency.

The hippie chick was from Chicago. She met someone from New Mexico and got married, had four kids then left her and the kids to fend for themselves. She divorced him, lost custody and married me, what was I thinking. Soon after, I found a job in the furniture department of a department store.

College Part Three

We signed up for classes and we managed to get family housing on campus. I was going for psychology and she took art. Pavlov had some dogs and he got them to drool by ringing a bell. People can learn to behave in ways different than they normally do. I wanted to help people but you can't change people unless they want to change. I would get frustrated when I would hear about people in bad relationships. I wanted to go into marriage counseling. I knew something about divorce.

She took art and she got some canvas and oil paints. She made friends that were into oil painting. When she finished the class, her painting was in the art gallery with the others in the class. Very talented lady.

The internet was invented that year and I found myself in a computer lab with the wife and we were chatting with college people from all over the nation. We flunked out but not before I would make friends I would have for a life time. I went to Colorado and met a bunch of them at a chat fest. Well, I couldn't make any money chatting so I found a job at a pawn shop. She got work at an art supply store in the picture framing department.

Pawn Shop

I got hired on at the pawn shop. They had computers and they used an old filing system. I just learned filing and they wanted somebody that could do some heavy lifting. I learned how to hook up televisions and stereos. The work was good. I met some interesting people and the recession was good for pawn shops.

My wife worked at the art supply store in the mall in the framing department. When she wasn't at work, she was home. She was good company and very pretty. On weekends, she got the kids and they were fun to be with.

Then back at the pan shop, I was there some time and I was left in charge. A customer came in wanting to pawn a car. She was very persistent so I took the car in pawn. They fired me for it. I was out of work again.

Job Hunting Again

Out of work again, I hit the pavement. There was still a recession and nobody seemed to be hiring. I went to the papers and they got me a corner to stand on. Traffic was busy and people would stop and buy papers from me. Every now and then, I would meet somebody I knew and they would tip very well.

Looking for a job took me out of town to the truck stop. I put in my application and stopped for lunch. I met a truck driver and I asked her how she got into truck driving. She told me about how she found a truck driving school and the job you find pays for the school

I told my wife and parents that I wanted to be a truck driver and they tried to talk me out of it. I would never be home and it was very dangerous. Well, I wasn't going to sell papers for a living and trucking was hiring. I called around and found a truck driving school but it was in Dallas. I was in Las Cruces New Mexico. Then I made my mind up. I was going to be a truck driver.

Truck Driver School

I got on the bus to Dallas and I was picked up in a semi. They showed me to the hotel and I checked in. First thing in the morning, they showed us to the class room. There was an instructor and a chalk board. I did good.

Next was the track. We had a lot of backing practice. A semi will pivot in the middle so we had to learn to get it to pivot when we wanted it to. Then we had to practice parking the trailer between two trailers. After that, we took our semis to the track and we practiced making left and right corners. I hit a cone they had set up on the corner.

Then came the time to drive it on the road and practice for the driving test. Learning how to shift was hard. There is a clutch but you only use it to start and you used it when you stop. They took us to take our driving test. I passed. I made 98 in the class and there was a job recruiter at the school. They found me a job. I would go to Dallas to go to on the job training, then I would get to take the truck home to New Mexico. They would even give me cash advances every week.

Trucking OJT

I Went home and kissed the wife good bye. There was somebody to meet me at the bus station in Dallas. He took me to the yard. There were trucks coming and going. They showed me how to do the paperwork and I watched the safety films. Then they put me with a trainer.

We were teaming up. When you team drive, one person sleeps when the other drives. We got to the customer and he showed me how to put the trailer in the dock and get the paperwork. Then you get the map and pick your rout. You have to plan for meals, fuel and showers. Truck stops had meals fuel and showers. Also, the weight on the axles had to be legal. You get loaded and go scale out. You had to pay for it but you get reimbursed. I also got 100 a week for a cash advance. I could send money home to the wife.

I spent a few weeks with a trainer and he had a dedicated rout over the mountains in Oregon. I learned how to keep from burning my breaks on steep mountains. When it was time to trade trainers, I had already made a name for myself. I could do ten hours of driving without a break. Trainers liked that they could get a good rest with me driving. The log book law was that you could only drive ten hours then you had to take a ten our break. Not many people could do the whole ten hours. I also got very good at night driving. Also, I could send more money home. The wife still worked at the frame department so I wasn't too worried about her.

Trucking Up

It was going to be several months before I could bring my wife with me. Well I finished my training, went into the yard and they handed me keys. I started in Dallas. Map reading, rout planning, and planning for meals and showers was getting to be second nature for me. Then I went to the customer and went to the shipping office. Signing the papers and hooking up to the trailer seemed a lot easier. Prepaid phone card were there so I could call the wife. I would stop at a pay phone a couple times a day.

The kids were starting to get into trouble and I knew they needed their mother. Well months went by and I was able to have her on the truck with me. Shot glasses were sold in the truck stops and I managed to collect forty of them. I didn't get east of New Jersey with this job and I didn't get to North or South Dakota. The wife was good company and we were together over a year. We met other couples and some were teams. She lost her driver's license because she didn't pay child support.

Her kids were getting into trouble so I asked her to get off the truck so she could be there for them. We found an apartment that would let me park the semi and I left to go back to work. I would call her and send money every week. I was only home one weekend a month. I came home and the rent hadn't been paid, the kids broke into the apartment and she locked me out. I quit that job and found one where I was home every night and I filed for divorce.

Stop And Smell The Roses

Back to nation wide trucking? I found another job and I was on my own. Coast to coast trucking was a good living but I felt like life was passing me by. Using the internet and chat rooms I met some people and when I was in town we did things. Time off wasn't that hard to arrange.

One girl I met took me to the local races. She had a friend that liked to race. Another girl I met was a barrel racer in the local rodeo. She was good company. One time I met someone for karaoke. Then there was the girl I met for movies.

Some how, I never got back to see them again. I wanted a relationship but I couldn't make it work. I just never got back into town. There is a lot to be said for those years I could dance with a stranger. The mystery of getting to know a stranger was a good feeling but I wanted someone that was there for me.

Married Three Times

There she was in an online chat room. She worked in a credit card company in customer service, I quit my job and took a Greyhound to Maine. I went looking for a job. It took a month but I found a trucking job out of Bangor. Work was a hundred mile drive or I enjoyed the drive. We got married in New Mexico so my parents could meet her.

The job took me from Bangor to Chicago and back. I was gone all week. This happened for a few year. A lot can happen. The towers in New York were destroyed by terrorist and my mother called to check on me. I got on the phone and called all my east coast friends. They were fine.

Then, my wife had surgery and she told me she didn't want me with her. So, I came home and she locked me out of the bed room. I was moved to the basement. There was my guitar, my music recorder and my computer. So, I moved from Maine to Pennsylvania to try again. I did make five albums in the basement tho. I filed for devorce.

Married Again for the Wife

So I moved to Pennsylvania. Then I met a biker girl online. She was my type. She could draw and write poems. I move in with her and I made plans to publish my novel. It was a story called “Kiss My Fate” and I paid to get it published. I wrote it when I was driving semi in Maine. I would type a chapter every night before I went to sleep.

I moved in with her and quit my job. Job hunting was tough but she found me a job. There was a company the made tall parking garages and I drove for them. It was a good job. She wanted to drive too so she quit her job at the factory and we drove team together several years.

Things were going good until I came down with Multiple Sclerosis and had to quit driving. A few years later, she hurt her back and had to quit driving too. I kept busy. I started writing and recording for a podcast I came up with. I would write three paragraphs and recode them to mp3. The I would put them up in iTunes. One year I would put them in public domain archives.

Thank You

That wraps it up. Thank you for reading.
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